

*Watch Hill Fire District
Watch Hill, R.I. 02891*

DISTRICT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, August 12, 2016

4:00 p.m.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the District Council of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, August 12, 2016.

The following members were present:

Charles S. Whitman III, Moderator
Robert C. Murray, Treasurer
Paul Verbinnen, Finance Committee Chairman
Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman Park Commission
Andrew J. Parsons, Member at Large
William J. Miller, Jr., Member at Large
Steven Tighe, Finance Committee
Elizabeth W. Bean, Park Commission
Robert Peacock, Fire Chief

Other voters present:

Mr. Jack Spratt
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Sculco

Also present were:

Alicia Perrone, Fire District Office Manager
Judy Kelley, Fire District Office Manager, Ret.

Proper notice having been given and a quorum being present, the Moderator, Charles S. Whitman III, called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Minutes

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of May 27, 2016, which were previously circulated, were approved.

Report of the Treasurer

Mr. Murray reported that the cash position of the Fire District is strong at this point. There is a current balance of \$248,000.

Report of the Finance Committee

Mr. Verbinnen reported that the Fire District is on track with everything to date. Since it has only been about a month ago that the budget passed, there are no surprises thus far.

Report of the Park Commission

Mr. Simmons gave an overview and review of current projects. With regard to the sea wall repair, that project has been completed. The sea wall should be reevaluated in approximately three years to look for any holes or soft spots which would need to be drilled and filled at that time.

The bathhouse repair is finished and usable and passed town inspections. There is more work to be done, but it will have to wait for possibly the budget year of 2017-2018. Also, a door repair mix-up happened in June. The actual bathrooms are usable and the Business Association wanted to wait until the end of the season for a complete repair of the doors and partitions.

The update on the lease review of the four leases including the Merry-Go-Round, Bathing Beach, Dock and Larkin Road is that they are being reviewed in executive session with the hope that they will soon be completed in order to be reviewed for approval by the District Council. As most of these leases expire annually, and HOB Yachts needs to start billing for next year, they hope to have final drafts soon. Mr. Whitman noted that the lease review has been taking place in executive session as allowed under Rhode Island law. Some have suggested to him that the leases should be put out to bid, but he is not sure if that would be the way to go. Most Rhode Island Fire Districts do not own property the way that the Watch Hill Fire District does.

In conclusion, Mr. Simmons noted that the Conservancy is doing very well this year with all of its ongoing projects and the Larkin Lot is having a banner year because the weather has been so great.

As a side note to the lease review process, Chief Peacock mentioned that it should be taken into consideration that the new boat to be purchased will need an actual slip and will not fit next to the bulkhead like the current boat does. This is because at low tide the boat actually touches the bottom.

Report of the Fire Department

With regard to the purchase of the new boat, Chief Peacock stated that they are looking into a converted Coast Guard boat which is what some other fire departments are doing at this time. However, this would mean buying an old hull with the need to put new engines and electronics on it. Although if a new boat was purchased a warranty would come with it.

Staffing issues remain the same to date. Calls as well, with Thursday, August 11, 2016 being a particularly busy day due to the issues caused by the stormy weather.

Mr. Murray asked what the status of the new alarm system was. Chief Peacock said at this point there are two things causing delays, which would be the need to complete this in the off season and the need to put an antenna on the top of the Ocean House which will require their approval. The hope is that it will be done by December 1, 2016.

New Business

Mr. Whitman noted that there had been several requests for the Fire District to use email to make notifications for upcoming meetings. All meeting are posted to the State website and there are no other legal requirements for notifications. With that said, the Fire District will keep doing things as they have been while at the same time making a better effort to keep the District's website more current.

It had been noted by several residents that the office hours for the District Office are not convenient to residents for packet pickups. Going forward, the office hours will remain the same with extended hours on Memorial Day weekend of 2017 and possibly having a weekend in the beginning of July 2017 with some extra office hours built in.

The packets that contain the parking stickers also contain the hurricane passes. If a person is entitled to a parking sticker they are entitled to a hurricane pass. The Town of Westerly passes the regulations regarding the hurricane passes, while the Fire District facilitates their distribution.

Mr. Simmons and Mr. Whitman have talked to the Police Department regarding a greater police presence, but with the current condition of the Police Department being understaffed, there will not be much change at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Perrone
Office Manager